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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 31 January 2018 11:01 AM
To: Policy AGD
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Response to Discussion Paper "Modernisation of the Anti-Discrimination Act"
Attachments: A03 - Letter Out - NT Christian Schools Submission AD Act Review.pdf; DBC Response to Modernisation of Anti-Discrimination Act 2018 (3).docx; DCMA - Anti-Discrimination Act proposed changes response - Copy (2).pdf; Johns Hopkins Psychiatrist statement on Transgenderism.docx; Gender Insanity vs Gender Reality - Bill Muehlenburg.docx; Rebutting the Transgender Myths - Bill Muehlenberg.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Director, Legal Policy
Department of the Attorney General and Justice

Policy.AGD@nt.gov.au

31 January 2018

Dear Director

Response to the Discussion Paper: Modernisation of the Anti-Discrimination Act

1. We unconditionally support the submission by NT Christian Schools, [REDACTED] – see attached.
2. We unconditionally support the Submission made by Darwin Baptist Church [REDACTED] – see attached.
3. We unconditionally support the submission of the DCMA – Anti – Discrimination proposed changes response – see attached
4. In addition we would like to emphasise the following aspects of the proposed “Modernisation of the Anti – Discrimination Act September 2017”
 - a. **Gender Identity.** It seems that the proposals wish to include attributes other than male / female as identified by their sex. We would request that you refer to many articles which have been written on this subject, one of which is attached herewith entitled “Transgenderism is a Mental Disorder which deserves to be treated” – an article by eminent psychiatrist Dr Paul R Mc Hugh from Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Further we refer you to two other articles which are attached written by an eminent ethicist, Bill Muehlenberg entitled “Gender Insanity vs Gender Reality” January 12, 2018 and “Rebutting the Transgender Myths” April, 2017.

We would suggest that we need to be open and honest before we go down the path of Gender Fluidity and have much longer and open discussions about this matter. It seems apparent that there is a very small proportion of our community which drives this while by far the majority would vehemently oppose this direction for our future.

- b. **Religious Exemptions** The two bodies which we are a part of, [REDACTED], have been set up to serve their membership. This membership is limited to those who subscribe to the basic tenets of their organisation. Freedom of religion is a basic tenet of our Australian society. The current Act contains a permanent exemption which protects religious freedom and allows Institutions to operate in accordance with its religious doctrine. This is good and right. These organisations should continue to make decisions based on their religious principles. Any change would make them subject to someone else’s principles which is unacceptable and goes against the Freedoms which have been guaranteed in recent discussions. Religious freedom is a human right and must continue to be protected. All other states and the Commonwealth provide exemptions to protect religious freedom. We must continue to protect this in the Northern Territory.
- c. **Vilification.** The words ‘offend’ and ‘insult’ set too low a threshold and could cause people to bring complaints without much basis. We need to continue to encourage people to engage in robust discussion about issues which they feel strongly about and should be able to disagree and respect others’ opinions. Words such as hurt, anger and anxiety are too subjective. It is suggested that more thought needs to be given to this area to strike a fair balance between legitimate concerns and potential frivolous complaints.
- d. **Modernising Language** - The discussion paper proposes “that the language in the Act be modernised generally to be gender neutral and remove offensive language. In particular it is proposed that the g [sic, presumably gender] terms ‘man’ and ‘woman’ be amended as follows.” We again commend the principle to modernise the Act, though find the implication that the words ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are offensive rather spurious. We have yet to meet anyone who finds what is accurately described as ‘man’ or ‘woman’ offensive. This is a simple fact. The terms man and woman are no less offensive than male and female. These terms are natural biological terms descriptive of a person similar to race and age, other terms used throughout the document. We would oppose such a move as it inaccurately makes claims that words are offensive. This could be said by a very small minority who are trying to change our society to one which reflects their personal perspective, not shared by the vast majority. Again, before such a move is made much greater public consultation must take place.

There is much more to be said but most of it has been said in the contributions made in the attachments by NT Christian Schools, Darwin Baptist Church and Darwin Ministers’ Association, which we support.

We would request that we are kept up to date with respect to the Government’s responses with respect to these matters and that any action be transparent and accountable.

We further request for a further opportunity to comment on any draft bill once it has been more settled in its form.

We thank you for this opportunity to have input into this very important discussion.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

31 January 2018